

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-5. (Cancelled)

6. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head, the slider comprising: a medium facing surface that faces toward a recording medium; a substrate having a first surface that faces toward the recording medium and is located farther from the recording medium than the medium facing surface; and a second surface that meets the first surface; a thin-film magnetic head element located near the second surface of the substrate and near the medium facing surface; an insulating portion surrounding the thin-film magnetic head element and having a surface that constitutes a part of the medium facing surface; and a medium facing layer located adjacent to the first surface of the substrate and having a surface that constitutes another part of the medium facing surface, wherein: the substrate has a hardness greater than that of the insulating portion, and, as the substrate and the medium facing layer are compared in hardness, the medium facing layer has a hardness closer to that of the insulating portion, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a slider material including the substrate, the thin-film magnetic head element and the insulating portion;

forming the first surface in the slider material, by etching a surface of the substrate facing toward the recording medium;

forming the medium facing layer in the slider material so as to be adjacent to the first surface; and

forming the medium facing surface in the slider material, by lapping a surface of the medium facing layer facing toward the recording medium and a surface of the insulating portion facing toward the recording medium.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 6, further comprising the step of forming a ~~concavity/convexity~~concave and convex portions in the medium facing surface to control flying of the slider over the recording medium.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 7, wherein the step of forming the ~~concavity/convexity~~concave and convex portions is carried out using ion milling, reactive ion etching, or focused ion beam etching.

9. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 6, wherein the main material of the insulating portion and the material of the medium facing layer are the same.

10. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 9, wherein: the substrate is made mainly of aluminum oxide and titanium carbide; the insulating portion is made mainly of alumina; and the medium facing layer is made of alumina.

11. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 6, wherein: the substrate is made mainly of aluminum oxide and titanium carbide; the insulating portion is made mainly of alumina; and the medium facing layer is made of diamond-like carbon.

12. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 6, wherein the step of forming the first surface is carried out using ion milling or reactive ion etching.

13. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 6, wherein the step of forming the medium facing layer is carried out using sputtering or ion beam deposition.

14. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 6, wherein the step of forming the medium facing surface includes a step for rough lapping and, a step for fine lapping subsequent thereto.

15. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 14, wherein: the thin-film magnetic head element includes a magnetoresistive element for magnetic signal detection; and the step for rough lapping is carried out while detecting the resistance value of the magnetoresistive element.

16. (Original) A method of manufacturing a slider of a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 14, wherein the rough lapping is mechanical lapping and the fine lapping is a lapping including a chemical lapping factor.